

Football Premiership: West Ham United 2 Manchester United 2

## Slipshod champions lose their grip

David Lacey

MANCHESTER United, their place in the European Cup quarter-finals secure, turned to domestic matters on Sunday only to find West Ham United reluctant to be cast in the role of doormats. A win for Alex Ferguson's team at Upton Park would have enabled them to rejoin the leading pack in the Premiership but no sooner was victory in their grasp than it was whisked away by two late goals in two minutes.

Anything less than a draw would have been scant reward for the imaginative attacking football West Ham produced throughout. But for the bulk of the match this was not reflected in their finishing and, when an inspired piece of football from Cantona set up Solskjaer for Manchester United's first goal, to be followed by a typically audacious second from Beckham, it looked as if the game would be won more in the spirit of the wagers snatch than the carefully planned bank raid.

This was West Ham's fourth draw in five league matches and they have not won in the Premiership since beating Blackburn at the end of October. However, this performance offered them more encouragement than the bare facts of the result, not least because Harry Redknapp's much criticised Romanian pair Dumitrescu and Raducioiu looked more like the players they had been in the 1994 World Cup.

Dumitrescu began the game, with his compatriot on the bench, but it was Redknapp's decision to



Still no delight for Dowie... West Ham's Ian Dowie attempts to end his goal drought as he challenges for the ball with Manchester United teammates David May and Peter Schmeichel. PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

bring on Raducioiu, soon after West Ham had fallen behind, which eventually increased the pressure on Manchester United's defenders during the last quarter-hour. West Ham will now expect the pair to imagine they are playing the champions every week.

Not that Manchester United looked much like champions. Injuries in Vienna four days earlier had deprived them of Gary Neville in defence and Keane and Butt in central midfield. Hard though McClair worked, he is no Keane, and the Irishman's pace and strength were

badly missed as West Ham hustled, harried and pursued their opponents between the penalty areas.

For all their possession and territorial advantages West Ham still needed luck at the right time if they were to turn their first-half superiority into goals. Their shooting remained distant and awry; their final passes lacked the crucial element of surprise; Dowie toiled honestly but in vain.

Before half-time the Manchester United attack remained more a matter of theory than practice. Little was seen of Giggs or Cantona and

even less of Poborsky, who on being presented with the sight of Dicks advancing on him with the ball appeared to decide that Christmas was a more enticing prospect at that point than a tackle.

Yet West Ham were warned in the 40th minute what the consequences of their failure to score might be. Cantona headed Giggs's cross on to Solskjaer, who controlled the ball with a flick and a nudge before bringing Miklosko into urgent action for the first time, the West Ham goalkeeper turning the shot around a post.

The portent was not false. Eight minutes into the second half Cantona's superb through pass sent Solskjaer clear of a square defence to draw Miklosko before beating him with a low shot. As Dumitrescu swerved past two defenders before driving the ball a fraction wide of the far post West Ham looked far from defeated but in the 75th minute Phil Neville, who had replaced Poborsky, delivered a pass to Beckham in the penalty arc who scored another memorable goal, chipping the ball into the top left-hand corner of the net.

With Billie forced off by flu — not that this had spared the Croatian a first-half caution for a crude foul on Beckham — West Ham appeared done for. They had scored only 13 league goals all season and now they were two down with time running out.

Then it all changed. In the 77th minute Raducioiu spun past Johnsen on the left and, with Schmeichel anticipating a shot inside his near post, drove the ball past the goalkeeper into the far corner.

Two minutes later, Dumitrescu's through-pass found Hughes sprinting clear of the last defender. Schmeichel brought him down, Dicks put away the penalty as only Dicks can and suddenly West Ham were blowing bubbles again, leaving Ferguson and his team feeling a little flat.

"We didn't deserve to win," said the Manchester United manager gallantly, "and West Ham at least deserved a draw." But if Old Trafford wants to make a serious impact in the Premiership, United will not want to make a habit of losing two-goal leads.

## Tennis

## Money and power but little drama

Stephen Blarley in Munich

BORIS BECKER began the year with victory in the Australian Open and ended it in triumph in Munich on Sunday, beating Goran Ivanisevic 6-3, 6-4, 6-1 in the season's final tournament, the Grand Slam Cup.

Ivanisevic had beaten Becker six times before Sunday but on this occasion he never had a prayer. The 29-year-old German was in imperious form, particularly on his serve which the Croatian, who had won here last year, failed to come even close to breaking at any time.

Ivanisevic nearly pulled out of the tournament but apparently could not find the referee to tell him he was sick. A good night's sleep pulled him around and on Sunday, as beaten finalist, he became richer by \$812,500, while Becker won nearly \$2 million.

Ivanisevic was undoubtedly a little weary after his five-set semi-final victory over the Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov on Saturday but Becker was totally dominant. A single break in each set was enough for the German. Tim Henman had given him an altogether tougher time in Saturday's other semi-final.

There are no ranking points for the Grand Slam Cup. If there were, Henman would have leap several places, although his end-of-year position of 29 is testimony to the



Becker... Imperious form

progress the British No 1 has made in the last 12 months. Last year he finished 99th.

There were times in the first set and a half when Henman genuinely troubled Becker with both the velocity and range of his shots. For all of that, the possibility of an upset was negligible.

Henman banked \$440,000 for reaching the last four, doubling his prize-money for the year. However, the most valuable aspect for the week was undoubtedly the experience of playing Becker.

Henman had earlier beaten Michael Stich and MaliVai Washington, both ranked in the top 20. "It emphasised to myself that I can definitely play with some of the best players. What I need to do now is compete against the very best and that's something you just can't change overnight."

Vol 155, No 25  
Week ending December 22, 1996

## Europe sets terms for single currency

John Palmer and Michael White in Dublin

THE Dublin summit last week struck a crucial compromise on the road to monetary union, which paved the way for the launch of a single European currency on January 1, 1999 — but left John Major's Britain trailing defiantly in its wake.

As smaller European Union states, led by the Irish presidency, brokered an agreement between France and Germany on the new currency "stability and growth pact", European officials proudly revealed their winning design for the first euro banknotes.

The summit clears the way for a major political drive in the New Year to convince wavering public opinion in Germany, France and other countries to back monetary union — if the 1999 timetable can be met.

Mr Major conceded the other EU countries were making "Herculean efforts" to meet the 1999 deadline but said he was "very doubtful" that they would. Faced with rampant hostility to the euro from many Tory MPs, Mr Major balanced positive support for some EU initiatives with dire warnings that the Union could be "blown wide open" if states favouring closer integration insisted that others follow their lead later.

There had been fears a failure to agree the stability pact might have triggered doubts about the political will to keep to the 1999 timetable and the risk of currency turbulence on international financial markets.

The stability pact will hand far-reaching powers to the EU Council of Ministers to determine the fate of countries that take part in the single currency. If a country taking part in economic and monetary union breaks the terms of the single currency pact, the council could impose huge financial penalties.

Although all countries that join the monetary union will be expected to run balanced budgets, they will be allowed to run deficits of up to 3 per cent of GDP in any year. They will be permitted to exceed these limits only if they can show that they are victims of "temporary and exceptional circumstances".

But the difficult question was just how severe a normal economic crisis would have to be before a country with an "excessive deficit" was accorded a similar indulgence. The answer agreed in Dublin was that a country would have to show that it suffered an annual fall of real GDP of 2 per cent or more. In recent decades there have been only a dozen or so examples of countries hit by such a severe drop in output.

A country pleading for special treatment will still have to show that its circumstances are "nevertheless exceptional". In a binding political declaration, EU governments have agreed that this will normally only require an annual fall in GDP of at least 0.75 per cent.

The tortuous compromise is designed to alleviate fears, particularly in Germany, that the single currency might be too soft, and to prove that the EU will be tough on countries running up huge deficits. But by carefully ensuring that the final word on sanctions remains a matter for political decision, the pact can be presented in France and elsewhere as a defeat for the idea of automatic sanctions.

None of the provisions of the stability pact will apply to countries which do not join the single currency. But the strict financial targets set for acceptable budget deficits are bound to influence the attitude of the international financial markets towards non-EMU countries judged to be spendthrift.

Comment, page 8

## The Guardian Weekly



## Kofi Annan to lead UN into next century

Mark Tran in New York

KOFI ANNAN of Ghana has been picked as the next secretary-general of the United Nations after France dropped its opposition to a man who has spent almost half his life at the UN.

The end of a week-long impasse in the Security Council, caused by a French *Nah* in a round of straw polls, was announced by the British envoy, Sir John Weston, outside the council last week. The appointment has to be confirmed by a vote in the General Assembly.

France objected to Mr Annan because he could not speak French, but ended its veto after behind-the-scenes arm-twisting by some of the UN's most powerful members.

The outgoing secretary-general, the Egyptian Boutros Boutros-Ghali, said he was pleased that Africa would have a second five-year term at the helm. Mr Annan was nominated because the United States vetoed a second term for Mr Boutros-Ghali.

The choice of Mr Annan caps a 30-year career in the organisation that has given the 58-year-old Ghanaian an intimate knowledge of the UN, from budgetary matters to peacekeeping.

Mr Annan has enjoyed a steady rise through the UN bureaucracy. It was the Bosnia conflict which first thrust him into the public eye. Although he was criticised by some for a lack of charisma, his coolness under fire and his straightforward style earned him the respect of those who dealt with him. He is currently under-secretary-general for peacekeeping, a position he has held since 1993.

Washington Post, page 12

US critics turn on Netanyahu 3

Labour pushes Major into minority 6

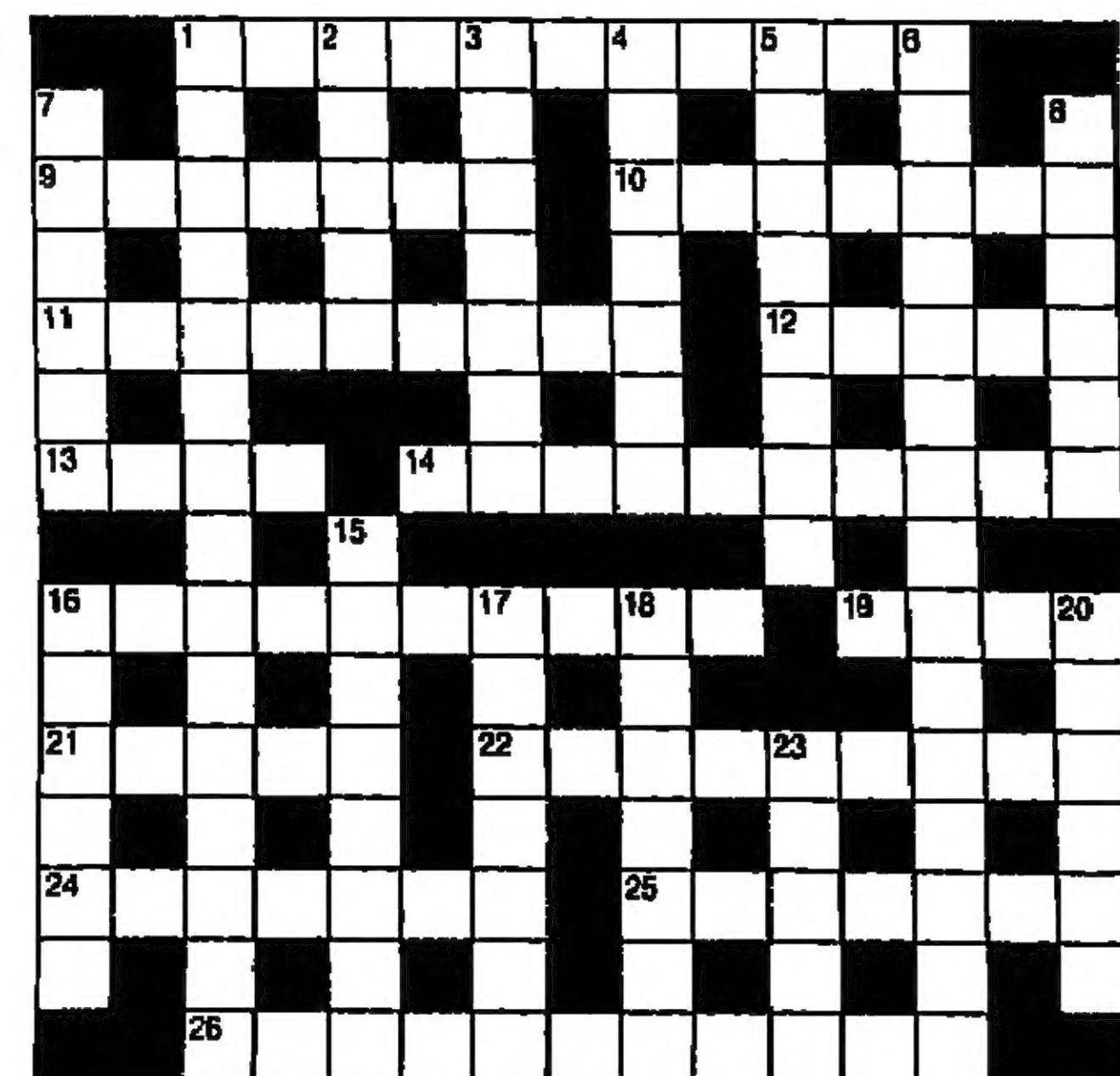
Van der Post, man of Africa, dies at 90 17

Britain's problems in black and white 18

Because of distribution problems over the holiday season, we are publishing next week's issue with this one.

Austria	AS30	Mails	50c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	SP 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

## Cryptic crossword by Araucaria



## Across

- Mr Mcp, shaggy, dishevelled, to beat record? (11)
- London palace of 1 down's 19 (7)
- Some hair specialists with some ornament for a hat (7)
- Haggler who wins another medal like the first? (9)
- I am a carrier and am taking everything back (5)
- Romance pursued by female willingly (4)
- 1 down's badly grazed and sore from something sharp (5+1,4)

## Down

- Little beast, about one of five, in drapery (10)
- Queen Elizabeth the first? (4)
- Old blast by jolly good fellow (5)
- Big story about saint at jewel of a church (9)
- Empty with silencer (7)
- Request to an establishment gets a funny look (7)
- In unobtrusive energy, sailors and soldiers are as we like them these days (5,5)

- Majesty: I feel sick at heart (8,7)
- Beast's desire to be included in the big guns (5)
- Hill is red stuff under the earth (7)
- Lake not supplied by a river in Spain (7)
- Getting no water to wash away real sins (8)
- Wander vacantly with a tanner from 1 down (4,3,8)
- Highball drunk by Miss Universe? (6)
- See 23
- Advance theory supporting sterling? (8)
- Character from a short story by 1 down (6)
- Knight no longer errant yet in Quaker Street? (7)
- Uranium extracted from titanium could be phoney (7)
- According to Wordsworth our birth is dead (6)
- Mud on shoes, English work of 1 down (5,3,3)

## Last week's solution

L A A S B M H B  
I N D I C A T O R O D O U R  
Q U I T U O G A E  
H E A R T E N O O D O L A  
T N E Q U S I F  
N I C K F R E E C H U R C H  
I E U A I  
N O S E G A Y M A N T I O N  
Q L A E H G  
S T O N Y B R O K E O D D S  
T F A A E B I P  
R E F U S A L G E O R G I A  
I D S I O G E C  
K H A K E B L O Q U E N O E  
E Y N F D S Y B



## Right stuff needed to fight corruption in Italy

IT IS not surprising that there may be a few bones, even if not a complete skeleton, in Antonio Di Pietro's cupboard (Dragged down by the Italian job, December 8). The Italian administrative and procedural set-up has long been a maze of intricate, mutually inconsistent and often absurd norms, so that (even discounting plain corruption) it is impossible for anyone to do anything without breaking the law.

The task of reforming public administration is not beyond the ability of even moderately rational human beings, but there are two main reasons why Italian politicians have never been seriously interested in it.

The first is that opportunities for corruption are increased, since there is always some regulation or ordinance allowing a clever lawyer to maintain that their clients' actions were not corrupt. Second, corruption in Italy was (and still is) all-pervasive, because, unlike Britain where it is a prerogative, almost a privilege, of those with power and authority, it has been allowed by the Italian political class to take root in administrative practices at all levels in the full knowledge that any drive against corruption would, therefore, become pointless.

Di Pietro is indeed a conservative, a "natural man of the right". His dedicated fight against graft, had it been led from the left, might have been easily discounted as normal political infighting. Led from the right, it was bound to make him appear almost unique, given the traditional propensity of Italian conservatives for corruption. It gave him enormous prestige and real power to damage his targets. Hence their present relentless attempts at dele-

gitimation and character assassination. Italy needs honest conservatives more than it needs honest radicals: Di Pietro may be down, but he is certainly not out.

(Prof) Giovanni Caraniga,  
Department of Italian,  
University of Sydney, NSW, Australia

## Taking a close look at Africa

IN MY role as a historian and Africanist who struggles to make my own small contribution to our better understanding of the non-Western world, I appreciate those in the world of journalism who pursue the same goal.

Two recent articles from November 24 embody both the rewards and frustrations of this endeavour. Dominique Franche's piece on Rwanda was a masterful exploration of the roots of crisis in Central Africa, emphasising the historical origins of ethnic categories as well as conflicts over access to critical resources that lie at the heart of the problems.

So far so good. But Paul Brown's "Food Crops for the White Man's Table" is a step backward. In identifying the harm done by globalising the world food economy, his heart seems to be in the right place. But there were some glaring errors.

At one point he mentions "the nine sub-Saharan African countries". There are many more than nine sub-Saharan countries.

A more complex mistake comes when Mr Brown describes conversion of productive land in Africa from subsistence to cash crops as a

recent development. In fact, this has been going on for more than a century and — especially in West Africa — sometimes has been initiated by local small-scale entrepreneurs, and to their advantage. The process has accelerated in recent years, with less positive results for indigenous people; but addressing a contemporary problem is harder with a faulty grasp of its character and origins.

Mr Brown concludes by stating that appropriate land-use strategies and new technologies to "improve grain harvests 30-fold" would enable the world to potentially support 8 billion people. The wisdom and desirability of such a future escapes me. The overall point is that when framed by misstatements and unexamined assumptions, even an admirable message will not be well-received.

Thomas Johnson,  
Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

## Clinton exploits imperfect system

AN EDITORIAL on the US presidential election referred to "the paradox of victory for a Democratic president while his party fails to win back the House or Senate" (November 17). The paradox is not only apparent, but is an artefact of the political system in the United States, which fully shares the Anglo-Saxon fear of proportional representation. The arbitrary grouping of voters in Congressional districts skewed the results of the popular vote. Democrats got 51 per cent of the Congressional vote nationally, while the GOP got only 47 per cent, thereby constituting only a minority of a minority: the 47 per cent of the 49 per cent who voted. President Clinton ran ahead of the Republicans, but behind his own ticket. These facts are not widely reported.

Jeffrey Larson,  
Hamden, Connecticut, USA

FIND Martin Walker usually to be insightful with his outsider's view of what happens here in the US.

However, in his column of December 1, in discussing a potentially interesting division in the Democratic Party, he fell into the same trap as many journalists who report on public opinion research — confusing focus groups with polls.

Using the word poll to describe focus group research implies that the so-called data obtained are definitive and conclusive. This is hardly the case. As a long-time practitioner of marketing research I have often conducted focus groups for clients.

However, I have always warned that they are neither conclusive nor definitive. They help (often considerably) in building important hypotheses. Ideas should not be confused with data; they are related but they are not the same.

Eugene Triser,  
San Diego, California, USA

## Israel's prisoners of the past

LET US stop pussyfooting about. We are all prisoners of our past, and Netanyahu's past lies from Jabotinsky through Begin and Shamir to Rabin's assassin.

While I was helping to defend the Jewish quarter of the Old City of

Jerusalem during the War of Independence, the brave soldiers of Begin and Shamir in Irgun and Lehi were murdering the defenceless inhabitants of the Arab village of Deir Yasin, intending to create panic and to cause as many Arabs as possible to flee their homes and leave the land available for Jewish occupation.

The symbol of Irgun, a rifle held over the map of greater Israel, Palestine, the Golan and much of Jordan, portrays the ambition of the right wing in Israel — all of this area should be opened to Jewish settlers to establish the state.

Therefore the only course open to him is the establish homelands on the South African model and maintain an occupation force to contain them. This is not the Israel we fought for 50 years ago.

Yohanan Ben-Zvi,  
Auckland, New Zealand

IT SEEMS hard, this comparison between the Bad Netanyahu and the sainted Rabin/Peres. After all, it wasn't Netanyahu who massacred villagers in Lebanon earlier this year; it wasn't Netanyahu who triggered a round of bombings with an assassination in Gaza; it wasn't Netanyahu who made the original decision not to withdraw from Hebron. Yet it is Netanyahu who is being set up to take the rap for the failure of the so-called "peace process".

One needs very acute vision and an affinity for fine lines to draw distinctions between the various Israeli governments. They all follow the same basic policy: if Netanyahu has approved new land expropriations in the West Bank, so did every one of his predecessors; if Netanyahu has fired on unarmed demonstrators, so did every one of his predecessors. A superficial change of government could not have damaged a peace process that was not fatally flawed to begin with.

Clifford Story,  
West Ryde, NSW, Australia

## All about myself

CHARLOTTE RAVEN'S article (Me, Myself and I, November 17) presented feminism from an elitist perspective. Who is the "we" she's talking about? Maybe best-selling feminist writers are all emphasising the personal lately, but Raven totally ignores the deeply political, feminist work women are involved in at a grassroots level.

Her feminism reeks of an academic/mainstream feminism that many women now reject or totally ignore. Madonna? Only rich, middle-class women have the time to devote to analysing Madonna's life from a feminist perspective. Many other feminists don't care.

Raven makes it sound as though no women are fighting for the rights of women any more. That's really an insult to the many women who put their lives on the line to fight for political issues every day.

I suggest if Raven really doesn't want to "give up on the politics", then she should stop writing cute articles that generalise feminist attitudes and get out into the communities where many women — who call themselves feminists — are fighting for their political rights. The political is still alive in feminism it's just a matter of wading through the muck to get there.

Karen Brady,  
Nairobi, Kenya

## Briefly

REFERRING to your article "Iraq agrees to deal on oil for food" (December 1), I notice the beginning of the article refers to "UN conditions", but the last paragraph states "Diplomats said Washington was currently studying the latest pricing formula, etc". Does this mean the UN has actually moved from New York to Washington, or that the UN can do nothing without US approval? A Simons,  
Camp Hill, Queensland, Australia

I WAS appalled and disgusted with the contribution made by Ewart Wooldridge of the South Bank Centre to the conference on cultural institutions and their attraction for homeless people (Cultural centres act as community police, December 1). Mr Ewart, representing Britain, said: "However excellent the concert you attend, your evening is ruined if you have to clamber over a homeless person as you come out." Above all other problems homeless people face in their daily lives, prejudice is probably the most difficult to cope with.

Kerrie Devanney,  
Canberra, Australia

THE genetic structure of soya has been altered so as to enable the plant to survive the very intensive use of toxins designed to kill off anything that threatens the soya plant during its growth.

While the long-term effect of eating genetically altered plants may be worrying enough, far more tangible worry is that this product is likely to absorb and retain toxins which will then find their way into those who eat the soya produce.

Why is the British government not taking a stand? Alistair C Blunt,  
London

VERSEAS aid cut by 8.4 per cent. What does the Budget mean to me? Deep shame to be British, and despair at the society I live in.

(Rev) Nicholas Bradbury,  
Chippingham, Wiltshire

IN explaining the withdrawal of £50 million from war pensioners, the Prime Minister proclaimed to the House that this could be justified because "... we always listen to the experts and act accordingly".

This is an attempt to raise a smoke-screen around the proliferation of ageist policies on the political agenda. During the past few weeks the Government has openly opposed the inclusion of age discrimination among the topics to be discussed at the European Inter-Governmental Conference.

Don W Steele,  
Association of Retired Persons,  
London

## The Guardian Weekly

December 22, 1996 Vol 155 No 25  
Copyright © 1996 by Guardian Publications Ltd., 119 Farringdon Road, London, United Kingdom. All rights reserved. Annual subscription rates are £49 United Kingdom; £55 Europe inc. Else, USA and Canada; £63 Rest of World. Letters to the Editor and other editorial correspondence to: The Guardian Weekly, 76 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3JQ. Fax: 44-171-242-0485 (UK: 0171-242 0585; e-mail: weekly@guardian.co.uk).

## US criticises Israel over settlements

Barry Schweid in Washington

BREAKING a long silence, President Bill Clinton publicly chided Israel on Monday for its policies on Jewish settlements on the West Bank, calling them an obstacle to Middle East peacemaking.

The Israeli cabinet decided last week to channel millions of extra dollars to the settlements. The arrangement, which will entitle settlers to generous tax concessions and government grants, could encourage Israelis to move to the occupied territories. Government officials hope the incentives will swell the number of settlers to more than 500,000 by the end of the century.

Mr Clinton's criticism was prompted by disclosure of a letter that three former US secretaries of state and five other former top officials had jointly sent to the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, warning that his support for the settlers could have "tragic results".

Mr Clinton had taken a relatively patient and low-key approach to Mr Netanyahu and his government's policies since the Likud leader won election in May and during his own re-election campaign.

In fact, the Clinton administration had stopped a long-standing policy of referring to the settlements authorised by Labour and Likud governments as obstacles to peace. But when a reporter asked on Monday if he considered the presence of 140,000 Jews on the West Bank and in Gaza among more than 2 million Arabs an obstacle to peace, Mr Clinton snapped: "Absolutely."

The State Department and other government offices are likely to take the cue and intensify pressure on Mr Netanyahu. The prime minister has kept a promise not to start new settlements but irritated the Palestinians by reviving subsidies and tax breaks for Jews on the West Bank and in Gaza after a four-year lapse.

The Palestinians want the Israelis to leave the territories. They intend to build on the administrative control granted them by previous Israeli Labour governments and establish a state with Jerusalem as its capital.

In his exchange with reporters at the White House, Mr Clinton said Israel and the Palestinians had agreed to leave the explosive settlements issue to the negotiating table.

Describing the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians as full of tension and frustration, Mr Clinton said he had made his concern clear to the Israelis. "I don't think anything should be done which would, in effect, be seen as pre-empting the outcome of something they've already agreed should be part of the final negotiations."

At the same time, he urged the two sides to conclude successfully their protracted negotiations to bring about a partial Israeli pullback in the West Bank town of Hebron. Otherwise, he said, the current equilibrium in the Middle East could give way.

Talks between the PLO and Israel resumed on Monday on Israeli troop redeployment from Hebron, signalling an easing of tension between the two negotiating parties.

The former secretary of state, James Baker, who conducted extensive Arab-Israeli negotiations under

President Bush, said the Clinton administration had been backsliding. "We have gone from calling the settlements illegal in the Carter administration, to calling them obstacles to peace in the Reagan and Bush administrations, and now we are saying they are complicating and troubling," Mr Baker said.

Addressed to Mr Netanyahu, but intended also as a signal to Mr Clinton, the letter signed by Mr Baker and the other former officials registered concern that "unilateral actions, such as the expansion of settlements, would be strongly counterproductive to the goal of a negotiated solution".

And, the former officials of Republican and Democratic administrations said, the settlement activity "if carried forward, could halt progress made by the peace process over the last two decades", the letter said.

"Such a tragic result would threaten the security of Israel, the Palestinians, friendly Arab states and undermine US interests in the Middle East."

Among others who signed the letter were secretaries Cyrus Vance and Lawrence Eagleburger, and former national security advisers Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft and Frank Carlucci.

Past administrations have criticised Israeli settlements as obstacles to peace. The Clinton administration had taken a softer approach, describing settlements as unhelpful. — AP

● The leading arm of the pro-Israel lobby in the US has suffered a sharp legal setback, required by an appeal court ruling to disclose the sources of its funds and how the money is spent.

The blow comes just as the Arab press has launched a strident campaign against the new US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright.

Washington Post, page 11



A woman wades through flood water in the outskirts of India's southern city of Madras. Thousands of homes were submerged during heavy rains in Tamil Nadu which have claimed more than 80 lives. PHOTO FRAMESH

## Britain urges Cypriots to end arms race

Chris Drake in Nicosia and Ian Black in London

MALCOLM RIFKIND, the British Foreign Secretary, told Greek and Turkish Cypriots on Monday that it was their responsibility to find a solution to the problems of the divided island, and warned that greater militarisation could defeat efforts to start peace talks.

Speaking at the end of a brief visit to Nicosia, he said the number of troops and weapons on the island was "dangerously high" and out of all proportion to either side's defence requirements.

Mr Rifkind, the first foreign secretary to visit Cyprus since independence from Britain in 1960, brought no new initiatives for reunifying the island, divided since Turkey invaded in 1974, but he offered a 10-point plan for building confidence.

"I sense there is a view in both communities that 1997 is a crucial year that could mark nuclear progress or be a massive lost opportunity," he said after meeting the Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktaş.

Outlining his 10 points, Mr Rifkind said the boundaries of a future Cypriot federation should not follow the present ceasefire line, and called on the two sides to take steps to encourage mutual confidence.

Mr Rifkind stood firm on his determination to meet President Glafos Clerides and Mr Denktaş and said the separate meetings had given him a clearer idea of the two sides' feelings and aspirations.

For Mr Denktaş in particular, entertaining a British minister in the Turkish-occupied north was a coup, although he criticised British suggestions that Cyprus's talks on accession to the European Union in

1998 could be used to persuade Greeks and Turks to reach a quick agreement.

Mr Denktaş also said he had been ready for face-to-face talks with Mr Clerides for many months, as the international community has urged, but Mr Clerides had refused to attend a meeting. The Cyprus government says it wants to see progress first and will not join talks for the sake of public appearances.

Britain and foreign powers are worried by the intercommunal violence, and by the Greek Cypriots' determination to buy weapons to match those held on the Turkish part of the island and the Turkish mainland.

After many years in which the Cyprus problem failed to arouse foreign interest, the threat of a war that would involve Greece and Turkey, both Nato members, has at last attracted world attention.

## Golden opportunities

### Call-Accounts

Interest rates up to 20% p.a.

Choose between 14 different currencies.

### Investment Certificates

Increasing interest rate over 5 years with continuous access to your funds.

For example:

Swedish Kroner from 3% to 8% and

Pound Sterling from 4% to 8%.

Many other investment possibilities.

Minimum investment only USD 5,000 or the equivalent

**Bank of Copenhagen**  
Den Københavnske Bank

4-6 Østergade · DK-1100 Copenhagen K · Denmark  
Tel. +45 33 11 15 15 · Fax +45 33 93 77 14

For more information please mail or fax the coupon.

Name

Address

Postal code

Country

Telephone no.

GW



## The Week

**A** RECORD 250,000 people marched through the Serbian capital, Belgrade, on Monday, in the continuing protest against alleged government election fraud and in opposition to President Milosevic.

**B**ELGIANS are braced for further revelations in the child sex scandal that has horrified the country, as police search for more bodies of children at a disused coal mine near Charleroi.

**A**IR SAFETY officials were at odds and airline companies in confusion after senior investigators into the TWA 800 crash flatly contradicted their bosses' claim that a fuel system was the most likely cause of the accident off New York in July, which killed all 230 people on board. Washington Post, page 11

**I**NDIA and Bangladesh signed a new treaty to share water from the Ganges river. The leaders hailed the agreement as a stepping stone to improved relations between the two countries.

**B**ITAIN called on Greece to end the protests by farmers and deal swiftly with compensation claims by UK lorry drivers trapped in the road blockades.

**T**HE DEATH toll of people wounded in fighting between rival factions in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, stood at more than 100 on Tuesday.

**N**INE Indonesian democratic activists and a trade union leader went on trial charged with trying to subvert President Suharto's regime.

**N**EW ZEALAND'S prime minister, Jim Bolger, named four women and three Maori to his cabinet, days after his conservative National Party formed a coalition with the populist New Zealand First party.

**T**HREE cabinet ministers and a deputy minister are among 60 members of the ruling African National Congress who have applied for amnesty to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Washington Post, page 12

**T**HE leading Kenyan dissident Kofi wa Wamwere has been freed on bail from prison on health grounds and allowed to seek medical treatment abroad.

**A** ONE-DAY strike by civil servants protesting against government plans to impose a pay freeze threw Spain into chaos last week.

**T**HE Red Cross suspended work in Chechnya after six workers, all of them foreigners, were murdered in their sleep in Novye Atagi. The 14 remaining staff are to be evacuated.

## Burmese students risk wrath of junta

EYEWITNESS  
Minka Nijhuis

**"T**HE MEDIA exaggerate the situation," claimed the interrogators who took me off to the headquarters of the Immigration Office in the Burmese capital, Rangoon.

"There is only a very small problem in Burma and there are very few students involved, but the foreign media turn it into something big. This is bad for Burma's image abroad," declared a plainclothes policeman, who declined to disclose his name or rank.

What has been whispered for months, and hoped for by many, has come to pass. For days, students have demonstrated in the streets and on the campuses of Rangoon.

In the eyes of my interrogator, I read anger that CNN had managed to report the demonstrations. Was I one of those who took pictures of, or filmed, the protest? As the hours passed, he refused to take "no" for an answer. The tone fluctuated from the politely apologetic to the intimidating and hostile.

It took three hours before the decision was taken to deport me immediately. Back in Bangkok, I found out that three other journalists had been deported for entering the country on tourist visas.

For the first time since 1988, students have taken to the streets in large numbers. The Lon Htein, the dreaded riot police, and soldiers with guns have been posted on the roads. But the students continue to make their protests heard.

On Friday last week about 500 sat down at the intersection near the campus of Rangoon university. They



A student grips independence hero Aung San's portrait at a protest in Rangoon last week. PHOTOGRAPH BY PAULA BRONSTEIN

were joined by 1,500 bystanders, many of whom expressed their support. Memories of the 1988 uprising, and the brutal way in which the military cracked down on the protesters, were revived.

Passionate speakers took turns to express their demands as they clasped portraits of General Aung San, hero of Burma's independence struggle and father of Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League

for Democracy. They demanded the release of students still being detained and the right to establish an independent students' union. "These are demands about students' affairs, but actually this is all about democracy," said a physics student. "We want freedom for all the people in Burma," added his friend.

The tension rose as it became clear the army and riot police had blocked all roads leading to the

junction. "How should I spell violence?" asked a student who was writing out a placard addressed to the United Nations. It said the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) was "trying to use violence against students striking peacefully. Please help us".

The authorities set an ultimatum. The troops took their positions. The number of students had dropped drastically. They were a vulnerable group, this cluster of 150 students facing hundreds of armed troops and riot police with batons and shields. Their faces were lit by the flickering light of candles, and the chanting of prayers filled the night.

A crowd gathered on balconies nearby. They sang songs and shouted at the troops. At 3.15am the troops advanced and minutes later the students were dragged into trucks and driven towards an uncertain future. Then the eerie sound of sweepers filled the air, brushing away whatever evidence remained.

It is too early to say whether the demonstrations will lead to another major uprising, or how SLORC will respond to that. However, many foreign residents in Rangoon express concern over what they see as the authorities' tougher stand against any form of opposition.

They refer to the attack on M. Kyi on November 9 orchestrated by the authorities. Increasingly vicious comments and implicit death threats add to worries that her life may be in danger.

As a Rangoon-based senior diplomat explained: "The strength of the generals' hatred of Aung San Suu Kyi is such that expecting them to behave logically may be mistaken. The next step they take may be to kill her." — *The Observer*

## Nato forces set to pursue war criminals in Bosnia

John Palmer in Brussels

**N**ATO forces in Bosnia are to adopt a tough "suffocation" strategy in the new year in a concerted effort to seek out and help arrest more than 60 indicted war criminals.

Nato foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels last week, were told that without more robust action to bring alleged war criminals to trial in The Hague, the alliance might unwittingly lay the seeds of another war in Bosnia.

The existing 60,000-strong Nato peace force, IFOR, has resisted active involvement in the detention of suspected war criminals, arguing that its main task was to separate the warring parties.

But while Nato was reluctant to spell out precisely what new instructions troops will be given when a new stability force of 25,000 to 30,000 — SFOR — takes over this week, it was clear that a much higher priority would be given to the drive to capture suspects wanted by the international war crimes tribunal in the Netherlands.

"We will want to harass them and to suffocate them by gradually hemming them into places where they can be more readily apprehended," one Nato diplomat said.

"I would expect SFOR to begin to act sooner rather than later on the issue of war criminals if only because there will be a gradual run-

down in the number of troops in Bosnia over the next 18 months."

The new strategy was described as moving beyond the present low-key role on the war crimes issue, but stopping short of "turning SFOR into a police force".

It will include the provision of increased intelligence on the movements of suspected war criminals, and new authority for the international peace force to follow up cases on non-compliance with the tribunal by local police.

But at the heart of the new strategy is a greater willingness to have SFOR involved in the arrest and transfer to The Hague of indicted war criminals. No final decisions will be taken on the troops' exact role until a detailed military study of all the issues involved has been completed.

● Nato governments claimed last week that they had achieved a "breakthrough" by securing Russia's tacit consent for the gradual expansion of the alliance into central Europe; in return, Moscow will be offered a privileged security partnership.

Their optimism followed an announcement in Brussels by the Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, that Moscow would start negotiations with Nato on a new treaty, and would drop a previous condition that the alliance must first put its plans for enlargement on hold.

## Saddam's son wounded as gunmen fire on his car

David Hirst in Beirut

**T**HOUSANDS of people gathered on Friday last week in the Baghdad street where Saddam Hussein's elder son survived an assassination attempt the day before, in a staged celebration of Uday Hussein's remarkable escape from gunmen who attacked his car.

But there were suspicions that Uday's condition could be more serious than the regime has admitted, and behind the façade of celebration — marked by the slaughter of sheep — Iraqis were braced for sweeping retaliation.

A Tehran-based Iraqi opposition group claimed it was behind the assassination attempt. In a statement, the Islamic Dawa Party said: "A group of our heroic strugglers... inflicted the verdict of God and the people, Uday Saddam al-Tikriti, who has caused mischief and crime in the land, like his dictator father."

In Jordan, officials said the border with Iraq was closed for several hours after the attack, apparently to prevent those responsible from fleeing the country. Iraqi officials searched cars and passengers crossing the border after it had reopened.

Exiled opponents of the Iraqi regime said that the attack is a brutal shock to the system — proof that in spite of his success in securing a partial resumption of oil exports,

President Saddam is vulnerable to the sudden, unexpected blow that one day must bring his downfall.

According to Baghdad newspapers last week, Uday — officially described as only "lightly wounded" — was making a speedy recovery in hospital.

As details of the incident emerged, one report from Baghdad quoted witnesses saying two gunmen were involved. Accounts from the exiled opposition were more dramatic. They cited witnesses as saying that four or five men armed with machine-guns and grenades took part in the attack in al-Mansour, a smart residential suburb.

Uday, aged 32, was reportedly seen with his head covered in blood — although it was not clear, as his guards rushed him to hospital, whether this was caused by bullets or the smashed windshield. The assailants escaped.

If these accounts are true, the planning involved must be disturbing to the regime — although Uday has always presented an easy target. Notoriously reckless, especially when drunk, he would often career unescorted around Baghdad in an expensive car.

● The United Nations Compensation Commission was expected to rule on Tuesday that Iraq must pay the Kuwaiti Oil Company at least \$610 million to meet the costs of extinguishing the oil-well fires started by retreating Iraqi troops in 1991.

## Unicef calls for end to child labour

Victoria Britain

**U**NICEF called for an immediate end to dangerous and exploitative child labour in a report issued on the organisation's 50th birthday last week.

The United Nations Children's Fund estimates there are 250 million children working, many of them in the sex trade and in industrial jobs that threaten their lives.

In Slovakia in India, for instance, Unicef found a match-stick-making factory: "Dust from the chemical powders and strong vapours... were obvious... 250 children, mostly below 10, were working in a long hall filling in a slotted frame with sticks. Some were barely five years old."

Intolerable forms of child labour are so grave an abuse of human rights that the world must come to regard them in the way it does slavery, as unjustifiable under any circumstances, the report says. But, as it points out, ending all child labour will be a long and complicated business and some of the remedies proposed by Westerners have been counter-productive. The 1992 Harkin Bill introduced in the US Congress aiming to prohibit the import of products made by children under 15 is a case in point.

Although the bill never reached the statute books, the threat of it caused panic in Bangladesh's clothes industry and dozens of child workers were dismissed. The children, mostly girls, were traced and found to have moved on to more dangerous and exploitative workshops, or to have become prostitutes.

The report emphasises that child labour is mainly a product of poverty, and many surveys have shown that children's work is often essential to keeping the family just self-sufficient.

But the report draws a sharp distinction between dangerous work and more traditional labour, such as on family farms. New areas of child labour of the most exploitative kind have recently opened up in eastern Europe as living standards have plummeted, while in the United States, immigrant and ethnic minority children have been found working in fields wet with pesticides.

Unicef's priority is to press governments to provide free and compulsory education and to urge donors to tackle the economic pressures that have forced developing countries to cut education budgets.

## Out of school

Children of primary school age not attending school, %

Developing world: 10%

Developed world: 1%

World: 5%

Source: UNICEF

## Cracks appear in Manila peace plan

Owen Bowcott in Cotabato

**S**ECessionist Muslims rebels in the Philippines are training a new generation of fighters in mountain jungle camps around the western part of the island of Mindanao, despite the peace accord in September with the government of the mainly Catholic country.

In Cotabato, the administrative headquarters of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), children as young as 15 are being recruited for military service by the largest remaining insurgent group.

Three months into the peace

process, however, the war that lasted for more than 25 years has stalled to a political stand-off. Sporadic violence is interspersed with waves of kidnappings to raise funds.

On the streets of Cotabato, Philippine army patrols and checkpoints remain in evidence, while Cobra helicopters line the airport perimeter. The province's slogan may be "Land of Peace and Tranquillity" — but Cotabato's mayor entrusts his safety to five heavily armed bodyguards.

Under the terms of the settlement, the largest rebel faction, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), agreed to end its military campaign. Its long-serving leader, Nur Misuari, became governor of

the ARMM and chairman of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development.

The breakaway Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which demands an independent Muslim state in Mindanao and claims to have up to 100,000 armed supporters, rejected the peace settlement and is awaiting separate talks.

The conflict in Mindanao has deep historical roots. Religion reinforces tribal divisions; Islamic merchants from Indonesia converted the inhabitants long before the Spanish conquistadores arrived from Manila in the 1570s.

The Spanish, confronting their traditional religious opponents on

the far side of the globe, dubbed them Moors and began a campaign of military subjugation and the introduction of Christian settlers which continued until the Spanish were ejected from the Philippines by the United States in 1898.

The latest peace deal, negotiated by President Fidel Ramos, appears more likely to succeed than previous ones. It extends the pragmatic counter-insurgency policies he has adopted elsewhere in the Philippines, such as a succession of 60-day truces by the army in northern Luzon and other islands where it faces the remnants of the Maoist New People's Army formed to oppose Ferdinand Marcos.

# Earn 7.10% gross p.a.

## Limited Issue Bond. Rate guaranteed to 16/2/99.

Deposit £25,000 or more in an Island Fixed Rate Bond

(Isle of Man) Limited is backed by one of the UK's major building

and you can enjoy a guaranteed rate of

7.10% gross p.a. fixed until maturity on 16th

February 1999 with interest paid at the end

of the term. You've also got the reassurance of depositing with

a well-known and highly-respected name. Bradford & Bingley

societies as well as having the security of the

Isle of Man's own Depositors Compensation

Scheme. This is a limited offer. Bond, so

telephone or fax for details now on the numbers above

(quoting reference: GW10) or simply fill in the coupon below.

To: Mr Chris Lees, Client Relations Manager, Bradford & Bingley (Isle of Man) Limited, 30 Ridgeway Street, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 1TA, British Isles. Please send me details of the Island Fixed Rate Bond. Please also send details of (tick as applicable) Island Bonus (New Instant Access Account) ☐ Other Island Accounts ☐ US Dollar Account.

Name: (Mr / Mrs / Miss) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax No: \_\_\_\_\_

GW10

**BRADFORD & BINGLEY**  
ISLE OF MAN LIMITED  
Simply the right choice

ISLAND FIXED RATE BOND IS OF LIMITED ISSUE AND MAY BE WITHDRAWN AT ANY TIME WITHOUT NOTICE. WITHDRAWALS OR CLOSURE NOT PERMITTED PRIOR TO MATURITY EXCEPT ON DEATH OF DEPOSITOR. INSTANT ACCESS AVAILABLE FROM MATURITY. ALL INTEREST CAPITALISED AT MATURITY ON 16/2/99. INTEREST RATES VARIABLE THEREAFTER. FULL DETAILS AVAILABLE FROM REGISTERED OFFICE & PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS: 30 RIDGEWAY STREET, DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN IM1 1TA. REGISTERED IN ISLE OF MAN NO. 05221G. WITH SHARE CAPITAL AND RESERVES OF £121M. REGISTERED WITH THE ISLE OF MAN FINANCIAL SUPERVISION COMMISSION FOR BANKING BUSINESS. UNDER ISLE OF MAN LEGISLATION, DEPOSITS MADE WITH AN ISLE OF MAN OFFICE OF BRADFORD & BINGLEY (ISLE OF MAN) LIMITED ARE COVERED BY THE DEPOSITORS COMPENSATION SCHEME CONTAINED IN THE BANKING BUSINESS (COMPENSATION OF DEPOSITORS) REGULATIONS 1991 (AS AMENDED). THEY ARE NOT COVERED BY THE DEPOSIT PROTECTION SCHEME IN THE UK UNDER THE BANKING ACT 1987. HOWEVER, BRADFORD & BINGLEY BUILDING SOCIETY UNDERTAKES TO DISCHARGE THE LIABILITIES OF BRADFORD & BINGLEY ISLE OF MAN LIMITED IF THE LATTER IS UNABLE TO DO SO WHILE A SUBSIDIARY OF THE SOCIETY.







## The colour of Euro money

A VITAL milestone along the tortuous road to monetary union for Europe was marked on Friday last week. First, and most important from the point of view of ordinary people, it was the day when years of rhetoric were suddenly made flesh — in the form of specimen notes of the proposed euro, which will almost certainly become the sole currency for a core of European countries in a little more than five years' time — irrespective of whether Britain joins or not. The euro is no longer a figment of the imagination; now, for the first time, there is something to see.

Predictably, the embedded symbolism of the designs (bridges, windows and doors) was interpreted in contradictory ways. They reminded the Eurosceptic Tory MP Sir Teddy Taylor that the single currency was a gateway to mass unemployment, a window to misery and a bridge to civil unrest. But to Europhiles the images are windows of opportunity, bridges of reconciliation and gateways to a new age.

The second reason the unveiling was important is this. Even if Britain doesn't join the single currency it won't be able to avoid it. Sooner or later it will invade Britain. People will start to take out euro-denominated plastic cards when they visit Europe; some will want euro-savings accounts; others will want their mortgages backed by the "strong" euro — which may lead to some salaries being paid in euros in order to avoid having to repay a mortgage in a strong currency (the euro) out of wages paid in what might be a depreciating one (sterling). By that time chain stores and supermarkets — thanks to advances in electronic money — will be able to accept payments in either currency. In other words, if a core group of EU members, as seems likely, goes ahead with monetary union the whole European monetary scene will be changed whether Britain likes it or not.

The third reason it was important was that a deal appears to have been struck on the so-called stability pact, which removes one of the last remaining obstacles to Continental acceptance of monetary union. Under the Maastricht agreement countries are prohibited from allowing their budget deficits to go above a ceiling of 3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). That will affect British economic policy even if the UK doesn't sign up because the Maastricht criteria will become the standard by which the international markets judge British economic policy whether the UK is in or out of the single currency.

The problem is that if one or more countries decide to let their deficits rise to 4 or 5 per cent of GDP, then the burden of coping with it would fall on other countries, who would either have to transfer resources (cash) or have to suffer higher interest rates. There have to be some penalties but if the original German plan of automatic fines running into billions of pounds on recalcitrant countries had been accepted, it would have risked a massive social backlash in the gully countries. To impose fixed fines on countries with heavy deficits by forcing them to hand over more money is a bit like treating haemophilia with bloodletting. The compromise — with escape clauses for countries in recession at the discretion of the Council of Ministers — has fault-lines of its own (would the Council ever have the courage to apply sanctions?) but at least it looks as though a formula has been found that may be more acceptable to German public opinion. It remains to be seen whether the increasing likelihood of the single currency going ahead on the mainland of Europe will start to roll back the increasingly hostile tide of public opinion. The answer is that it probably won't unless Labour wins the general election and adopts a sustained strategy for winning the argument.

## Protect the food chain

BAD THOUGH this month has been for ministers, it should have been even worse. Yet thanks to the 400 miles between London and Edinburgh, ministers have escaped much of the wrath the media would have imposed had the food poisoning scandal north of the Scottish border struck south instead. Twelve people have died, 200 are infected and another 200 suspect cases

await confirmation. The *E. coli* 0157 epidemic in Scotland is now the second worst in the world in terms of fatalities. Only Canada, where 19 were killed in 1985, has suffered a worse tragedy.

Like the BSE fiasco, the latest food poisoning saga should not have been a surprise. Responsible officials had already raised the alarm. In his final report last year, Scotland's retiring chief medical officer pointed to the new poisoning agent, which emerged in North America in the late 1970s, and was spreading rapidly in Scotland. The Scottish strain was known to cause diarrhoea, severe abdominal cramps and vomiting.

Ministers could be forgiven for not being able to forecast a specific outbreak. Where they are at fault is in their general approach to food safety. It may sound good campaigning to cut red tape, but public protection requires rules and regulations. One minister — Nicholas Soames — dismissed food poisoning as "a mere inconvenience". Another, John Gummer, expressed scorn over a critical report on an outside catering event. The official, if unspoken, ministerial line was that promoting business was more important than health inspection.

Scottish legislation itself is defective in regard to hygiene training for food handlers. The Institute of Food Research has suffered a 25 per cent cut to its budget while many local councils have been forced by financial restraints to merge their health inspectors into trading standards departments.

It is against this background that the five-day delay in warning the public of the outbreak has to be judged. The Scottish Secretary blames local officials for the delay but, as the Glasgow Herald noted, "he had no business leaving such an important decision to hard-pressed local officials". The delay has undoubtedly helped spread the infection. The scandal is now being investigated by three bodies: a police investigation into possible criminal negligence; a fatal accident inquiry which will be able to question ministers and officials; and an investigation into the disease by a panel of medical experts. A fourth group, a special cabinet committee, was set up by Downing Street last week to look at the lessons for the UK. One overriding lesson has emerged from the succession of food scandals — salmonella in eggs, listeria in cheese, mercury in fish, alar on apples, sulphite in wine, BSE — in the past decade: the need for a separate food safety agency. Separating consumer from producer interests is the single most important change to improve public protection.

## A Hong Kong honeymoon

HONG KONG has acquired the chief executive whom it expected rather than deserved. Patriotic and wealthy, strong but supple, the shipping magnate Tung Chee-hwa fits Beijing's profile ideally for the post-handover job. He would not have been Hong Kong's choice, but someone else was choosing. Given the limitations, Mr Tung is still the most popular of the available candidates. He is, so to speak, the best chief executive that Hong Kong has got.

On the day of the announcement almost everyone was looking on the bright side. British ministers had "every confidence" that he would be a worthy successor to Mr Patten. Of course they would — especially since Mr Patten picked Mr Tung back in 1992 to add a pro-China voice to his own Executive Council. Taiwan sent congratulations: Mr Tung has family connections there, and Taipei hopes that he (and Beijing) will understand the need for restraint if Hong Kong is to be seen as a positive model.

Hong Kong civil servants suggest Mr Tung is a man of compromise. The first test will be whether he can work with Anson Chan, the current chief secretary, who has defended Mr Patten's political reforms. Even Martin Lee, leader of the Hong Kong democrats, has offered Mr Tung a "honeymoon on probation" and asked to meet him. Mr Tung's smartest move would be to respond positively. Both he and Beijing are committed to a "smooth transition", but that means living with the political ambiguities it requires. The burden for future has shifted from British to Chinese shoulders.

Not everyone is giving Mr Tung the benefit of the doubt. The campaigning legislative councillor Emily Lau says that Mr Tung will carry out Beijing's orders ruthlessly. Her protests are also an essential part of the pressure to ensure that he does not actually do so.

## Deserving not a shred of sympathy

Hugo Young

DAVID WILLETTTS, caught up in the cash-for-questions affair while a Tory whip, is a luckless victim, but one who deserves not a shred of sympathy. His crime was to do what other people do, engage in the subterranean tradecraft of political management. Alas, he was found out. But, being found out, he became the inescapable emblem of a period in politics when the voters are increasingly doubtful whether tradecraft and integrity can co-exist. His departure is a minimum necessity if the reputation of politics — I say nothing of the Government — is to be revived.

Some may catch here the stink of hypocrisy. If everyone in politics is, to some extent, a fixer, why should Mr Willetts's attempt at fixing be indicted as anything worse than the amateurish effort of a callow practitioner? Why dump on this clever fellow, a long-term asset to the cerebral side of politics, when many more unscrupulous operators burrow in the undergrowth? But that's an argument which concedes there are almost no limits to what it would be proper for politicians, in their own little club, to get up to.

Mr Willetts might have done better, all the same, to try to use it. He could have said that whips are the natural confidants of a committee chairman who faces the prospect of investigating an affair so explosive as the conduct of Neil Hamilton. The managerial question, the subject of his fateful talk with Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, obviously presented itself. The chairman no less than the whip had to be concerned.

Everyone in Tory politics was talking about the problem Mr Hamilton presented. In the free-masonry of the Commons — where every honourable man makes his own rules of honour — behind-the-hand conversation, "without prejudice" as the lawyers say, is a lingua franca that need not compromise any participant. It would have been interesting, had Mr Willetts taken this line, to see how his fellow operators, sitting in judgment on him, would have responded. They would have been hard-put to disagree.

Certainly he would have sounded better than he did in the event. He would have saved himself the tortuous wordplay which anyone less clever would have found too embarrassing to perpetrate, and which

sought to pretend that the words he wrote down did not mean what anyone but this brilliant jackass knew they meant. It was such patent duplicity that sent Quentin Davies over the top and persuaded him not to flinch from the role of his colleague's nemesis.

By going now, before being forced to, Mr Willetts does something to restore the House of Commons. The renovated self-policing system couldn't have survived a show of stubbornness. Tony Newton's skilful chairmanship, which produced a unanimous report, had to be predicated on the expectation that the committee's stringent criticism, stopping short of a divisive expulsion order, would be enough to get the accused to do the proper thing. At least some senior MPs, we learn, can collaborate in the assertion of standards that go beyond the partisan. The public will be glad to hear it.

The episode also does a little to support John Major's constant claim that politics are, in fact, clean. Of all that's often said about his time in office, the notion that he has presided over a period of unequalled political squalor is the one he most resents. He bitterly deplored every insinuation about the system that grew out of the Scott inquiry into arms for Iraq. Nowhere in the world is straighter, he insists. And it counts the number of politicians caught with their hands in the public till, that's not outside the bounds of possibility.

BUT OTHER paymasters come into the frame. The renaissance of Parliament and politics in the public estimation has some way to go. This may not be Le Carré's Panama, or even Craxi's Italy, and the civil service culture still does sustain a public life that is, for the most part, uncorrupt. But politics, especially Tory politics, are another matter. Tim Smith, who took money for asking questions, will apparently be asking the voters of Beaconsfield to return him for a fifth time. Neil Hamilton still proposes to offer himself for election in the Conservative interest, and may well be assisted in doing so by the squalid processes of the same committee that last week congratulated itself for putting the squeeze on Mr Willetts.

These are shocking deformities of the body politic, to contrast with the partial satisfaction Mr Willetts has been obliged to give it. Behind them stands the unresolved scandal of party funding. Mr Major and every minister without exception continue to cling to the indefensible line that giving money to their party, however vast the sum or distant the residence, should be a private matter. It is one matter on which there's not a single sceptic to be found.

Late though he was to discover his integrity, Mr Willetts has a basis from which to retrieve it, and with it his career, which he will probably do. In the grand calamity that is about to devastate his party, the brief misjudgment of the young MP will count for little. But until the party sees the point about its funds, the message in matchless integrity that Tory grandees drew from the Willetts affair will deserve all the cynicism it gets.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY  
December 22 1998

GUARDIAN WEEKLY  
December 22 1998

# Le Monde

## Winds of dissent stir in Croatian capital

Rémy Ourdan in Zagreb

WITH CALLS for democracy being voiced on the streets of Serbia, Croatia, too, may be at the crossroads only five years after winning independence.

Proud of its existence, arrogant in its detractors' eyes, Croatia has finally beaten back Serbia's territorial claims, and its ethnically homogeneous population is satisfied with the creation of the Croatian state. But the winds of dissent are beginning to stir in Zagreb and the period of national unity seems to be a thing of the past.

President Franjo Tudjman returned from the United States, after treatment for what appeared to be a cancer (officially, a stomach ulcer), to a divided country. When, two weeks ago, Zagreb residents swarmed on to the city's central esplanade in defence of Radio 101's independence, shouting slogans against the "thieves" in Tudjman's Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), they were venting a real frustration that goes far beyond calls for press freedom.

Young Croats who fought for their country's independence are irritated that their demands are ignored while members of the nationalist nomenklatura whip around the capital in limousines with smoked-glass windows. "Dynamo" is their rallying call.

Young people have not forgiven Tudjman for changing the name of their football club, Dynamo Zagreb, to Dynamo Croatia. One young Zagreb girl complained: "It's always Croatia this and Croatia that. The government should understand that what we want is to live normally and get away from nationalism and authoritarianism."

The demonstrations stopped when the government gave Radio 101 a 45-day reprieve. But nobody understood Tudjman when, after returning from Washington, he declared he was not going to "allow leftovers hankering for the communist period to jeopardise my work of building a Croatian state".

From now on, it is two genera-



tions who are standing face to face. "Croats are living on two different planets and neither side understands the other," was the opinion of a diplomat. The young people who took part in the anti-HDZ demonstrations are the same ones who brandished HDZ flags five years ago.

The neo-Stalinist analyses and diatribes against internal and external enemies that television carries every evening are signs of the government's increasing paranoia. Tudjman castigates Croats working for international organisations, often in areas of human rights and

press freedom, and refers to them as "these characters who take sides with the Devil against Croatia and sell themselves for 30 pieces of silver".

There are more and more scandals: Radio 101 was closed down; the opposition victory at the municipal elections last year rejected; the president of the Supreme Court dismissed; and strong suspicions that the privatisations have been particularly profitable for the government's friends. The presidential office does not seem to understand that Croatia, after the war, is changing rapidly.

Civil society is waking up after five years of ultranationalism. And for most people, the primary concerns are housing, pay, freedom of expression and greater integration with Europe.

"The 1991 aggression made us lose time and held back the process of democratisation, especially as those who are governing us are men who've never lived under a democratic system," said Milan Vukovic, a Constitutional Court judge. "But there's no limit to our desire to organise Croatia as a democratic state. No other community loves its country as much the Croats love theirs."

Dorica Nikolic, vice chairperson of the Zagreb municipal council, and a member of the opposition, isn't abandoning her patriotism either. She notes, however, that the government is still stalling on appointing a mayor who is not a member of the HDZ.

"President Tudjman and the HDZ think all the credit for creating Croatia belongs to them alone," she says. "And in doing so, they overlook the people's will. Young people, who take part in public protests because their football club's name has been banned or because their radio station is attacked, feel let down by the government."

The short time Tudjman was out of the country has moreover whetted the appetites of successors who are for the first time beginning to speak out. The taboo of discussing Tudjman's succession is increasingly ignored.

"There are extremists in the HDZ, this not very surprising," said Hrvoje Sarinic, general secretary at the presidential office. "I'm the only one to whom Franjo Tudjman entrusted the keys of the country without fear. The president is indeed trying to reconcile all the Croats around the creation of this state, and it is the same in the HDZ."

"There is the right and the left, and the president is trying to strengthen the centre. Those who are getting ready to step into his shoes are mistaken, for the president is in good form."

(December 7)

## Zagreb judge refuses to step down

KRUNOSLAV OLUJIC, president of the Croatian Supreme Court judge recently dismissed by the government, is refusing to step down until the administration produces proof of its accusations against him, writes Remy Ourdan.

Olujic was "a paedophile and embezzling the government". A disciplinary procedure has been initiated against the judge and newspapers are rivaling one another in coming up with "revelations".

"This decision is quite simply political," said the judge, accusing the government of organising a "public lynching".

"I want to testify that political blackmail and rigged trials are back in our country. President Tudjman wants a cronny at the head of the Supreme Court. My dismissal has been engineered by the HDZ's right wing, which wants to take over the judicial system."

Olujic used to be a close confidant of the Croatian president, who placed him at the head of the special services before he entered the Supreme Court. "As soon as I was appointed to the Supreme Court, I left the HDZ and worked for the independence of the courts," Olujic said.

He revealed that Tudjman was conferring with various judicial authorities "to co-ordinate the political persecution of opponents and independent journalists". He said that he personally refused to attend these meetings, which accounted for the government's anger.

"Politics prevails over justice," confirmed Vladimir Primorac, who was also removed from his post as a judge on the Supreme Court. "Olujic turned his back on them, and the result is he is convicted even before any charge is laid against him."

(December 7)

## Economic woes pose threat to democracy in Haiti

Jean-Michel Caroit in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

IN THE run-up to the US presidential election, Vice-President Al Gore spoke highly of the American intervention in Haiti, describing it as "one of the most skilful uses of diplomacy and military force".

Yet, two years after US soldiers moved into the island, Haitian democracy remains unstable. To shore it up, the United Nations Security Council has decided to extend the mandate of its peacekeepers, who took over from US troops on the island, until July 31, 1997.

The fledgling Haitian police force — hastily thrown together when the former president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, demobilised the army — lacks experience, training and equipment. About 50 trigger-happy recruits, who were responsible for making serious mistakes that have shaken public confidence, have been dismissed.

However, gangs of former soldiers still hold substantial stocks of assault weapons. Early in November five people were killed in a stand-off between a police patrol and a commando unit armed with assault rifles and hand grenades.

Two months earlier, President Clinton rushed a 30-man bodyguard to the island to protect the Haitian president, René Préval, after he dismissed the head of the presidential guard, who was involved in the murder of a political opponent. Compounding the violent activities of demobilised soldiers is a worrying increase in crime. As in the other countries in the region, repatriation by the US administration of Haitian criminals — who learnt their trade in New York and Miami — has coincided with the emergence of more violent crime.

And yet notable strides have been made in respecting human rights. Since the restoration of democracy, journalists work freely and demon-

strators feel no fear when voicing their discontent on the streets. The bloody repression during the three *coups d'état* years from 1991-94 belongs to the past, but it is a past that the champions of human rights will not forget. Their spokesman, Chenet Jean-Baptiste, said, "You can't speak of democracy in a country where impunity replaces justice."

The big challenge facing President Préval today is economic. The vast majority of the island's 7 million inhabitants is still waiting for the fallout from the restoration of democracy. Unemployment and poverty, which affect more than 60 per cent of the population, are again forcing the poorest to set sail in flimsy craft for the Florida coast or to cross the border into the Dominican Republic.

When he took office, Préval was aware of the urgent need to solve Haiti's unemployment problem, but he has been stymied by the conflict-

ing demands of the country's international backers and partners influenced by Aristide. It took six months of parliamentary wrangling before deputies and senators finally voted to reform the public sector, thus opening the way to privatising nine national enterprises and unfreezing international aid.

The vast majority of "people's organisations" — composed of neighbourhood groups, along with associations of young people and rural folk — rallied against the "neo-liberal plan" imposed by Haiti's international backers. The privatisations are still the subject of squabbles in the Lavalas movement, the vast grouping that carried Aristide to power in 1990. Despite official denials of a split in the movement, Aristide confirmed the divisions by recently announcing the formation of a new political party, the Famille Lavalas.

Without wanting to argue openly with the former Roman Catholic

priest who still commands powerful support in the underprivileged neighbourhoods, leaders of the Lavalas Political Organisation (OPL) have given Aristide's latest initiative a chilly reception.

With a majority in parliament and represented in the government by several ministers, including the prime minister, the OPL has been trying to organise the Lavalas movement without, and sometimes against, the ex-president. So far, Préval has cautiously sidestepped any row with Aristide.

The positive public response to the formation of a new group called Initiatives Démocratiques shows that the Lavalas movement is losing momentum. It is also a sign of the will to strengthen Haiti's still fragile democracy.

Intellectuals respected in Haiti and sponsors of democratic initiatives are beginning to worry about what might happen if the Haitian people, who expected the return of democracy to improve their living conditions, are let down.

(December 7)

Jagjit Singh



## In search of kindred souls

Alain Lompech looks at the career of piano master Maurizio Pollini who, below, gives a rare interview

THE Italian pianist, Maurizio Pollini, recently embarked on a cycle of seven recitals, due to end in June 1997, in the course of which he will perform 30 of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas (omitting the two short sonatas, Opus 49).

It is a massive undertaking. Playing so many hours of music by heart is a formidable challenge to the pianist's concentration, memory and ability to come in terms with earlier recorded versions of the sonatas. The public judges each new pianist who tackles the complete sonatas by the yardstick of his or her predecessors. This cruel process is inherent in the very notion of interpretation: music exists only when it is performed.

Pollini lives in Milan, the city where he was born nearly 55 years ago, with his wife and 14-year-old son, Daniel. The furniture and works of art in his flat are both old and modern, and reflect his catholic musical tastes, which range from Bach and Beethoven to Boulez.

Pollini is not exactly forthcoming and gives only rare interviews. He admits to having had some serious rows with people who were determined to win him over to their way of thinking.

One of his problems is that he is someone who is widely regarded — to his irritation — as the most perfect and technically immaculate pianist to have emerged since the war. He refuses to be an icon, despite the plaudits he has received from the great and the good in the music world.

When, at the 1960 Chopin competition in Warsaw, the 18-year-old Pollini gave a performance that won him first prize, Arthur Schnitzler exclaimed furiously to his fellow jury members: "Why, he already plays better than any one of us!"

Pollini had already won a prize two years earlier at the Geneva competition in the men's category. Martha Argerich, who won the women's prize that year (and went on to win the Chopin competition in 1965), still remembers being dazzled by the Italian teenager's performance.

Pollini gives only 50 or so recitals and concerts a year, and allows his recordings to be issued only after he has carefully vetted them. Now that the generation of keyboard giants born around the turn of the century is no more, he belongs to a select band of pianists who tower over their contemporaries.

Yet despite his perfectionism, which is worthy of Dima Lipati or

Wilhelm Backhaus, Pollini has not always been entirely convincing, either on disc or in concert. His charisma, however, fascinates music-lovers and fellow musicians alike.

An austere interpretation of a piece of music can sometimes end up telling us more about it than a flashy performance whose brilliance is as ephemeral as a fireworks display. Musicians who set off on a quest do not always immediately find kindred souls who understand them.

In the past Pollini, a committed communist, used to give recitals to help the protest movement against the Vietnam war. He performed in factories with Claudio Abbado and the La Scala orchestra. He also played in Paris in support of the campaign to free fellow pianist Miguel Angel Estrella, who was imprisoned in Uruguay.

Pollini is a great fan of contemporary music and has earned the admiration of Boulez, Luigi Nono and, now, Salvatore Sciarrino. But he is also on the lookout for new talent among those composers who are grouped together under the "new music" banner.

Forthcoming recitals of Beethoven sonatas by Maurizio Pollini at the Salle Pleyel in Paris: January 20, February 12, April 20, May 15 and June 10



Exercise in perspective... La Place des Vosges

## Images and harmony

Michel Guerrin meets veteran photographer Willy Ronis in Paris

WILLY Ronis, aged 86, was wearing jeans, a bomber jacket and trainers when he took me on a lightning tour of his current retrospective at the Pavillon des Arts in Paris.

We started with a picture he took with his first roll of film at the age of 18: it shows a group of youngsters having fun on a patch of grass with the Chevreuse Valley in the background — and is already characteristic of his style. "Anyone could have taken the pictures you see here," he said. "I'm an ordinary fellow who wanders around capturing reflections of the show that goes on in the street."

Out of "respect" for his public, Ronis has thrown in for good measure many unpublished photographs dating from 1926 to 1996. They rub shoulders with large prints of such Ronis classics as Nu Provençal, Bastille lovers, women riders at the Zapatta Circus, a barge going under the Pont d'Arcole, and other images that range in time from the Popular Front to the consumer society.

Ronis, a former Communist Party member who has remained "on the left" and whose pictures (always in black and white) plead for "a more fraternal society", loves the "poetry of the streets" (mostly Parisian) and the ordinary folk who people them.

Such is Ronis's skill, backed up by his solid convictions, that photographs which might have ended up being insipid have great substance. Lighting has a lot to do with it. "I was struck by the light on this woman's face," he said, pausing in front of a photograph of people in the Metro. "Without it, the photo would have been perfectly ordinary."

Ronis is also a great believer in composition and, on his own admission, obsessively tries to come up with the most "harmonious" form that can enhance perspective. He also keen to press the shutter at the right moment, so he can capture, say, a flying cauliflower or a wine-grower's guffaw. "To me, what goes on in the street is ballet."

The most surprising section in this exhibition of 170 photographs includes pictures Ronis took in the thirties, which do not fit into the classical mould. They include a curious 1935 photomontage called Le Réve d'un Clochard (A Tramp's Dream), photo-lab accidents which distort landscapes in a manner reminiscent of some of André Kertész's work, experiments with Brasserie-like cobblestones at night, low-angle shots, and a sensual picture of a woman's legs reflected in a puddle.

One of his most striking photographs — of a woman worker leaping over a fence — dates from 1938, but it was only in 1979 that he discovered it in his archives. "The photo brought memories flooding back." There are perhaps too many pictures in the show, the result of the generosity of a photographer who refuses to be stingy. Ronis has one nagging worry: "I've donated all my archives to the state, partly out of cowardice. After I'm gone, I hope they won't show things by me that I don't like."

(November 19)

Willy Ronis, Pavillon des Arts, Paris. Closed Monday. Until February 4

**Le Monde**

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani  
World copyright by  
© Le Monde, Paris  
All rights strictly reserved

## Israelis, Palestinians 'Slide Toward Crisis'

Barton Gellman in Jerusalem

SPREADING at the West Bank settlement of Eli late last month, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu defined sovereignty as "having the power to say to those who would dictate to you that they cannot dictate to you, that you have the power to resist."

Israel, he said, has that power now, and Palestinians must never acquire it. And with those words he may have put his finger on what is going wrong with the historic experiment in compromise between the Israeli and Palestinian national dreams.

Netanyahu is determined to impose his will on several questions that the Palestinians see as central to their future, most notably the status of East Jerusalem and the expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat aims to demonstrate that the Palestinians, sovereign or not, have ample "power to resist."

If a return to confrontation is coming, as many signs now suggest, it has its roots in that basic difference of outlook. It is not only that their negotiations are in a deadlock, or that the six-month-old Netanyahu government shares no common view with Arafat on the ultimate peace they seek.

The deeper question, and the one over which the two sides are now struggling, is whether negotiations will decide the important questions at all.

The Netanyahu government's decision last week on settlements in the West Bank raised that question again. The cabinet voted to transfer substantial government resources to Jewish settlers and those who join them in the West Bank, designating new building in the occupied territories an "A-level national priority."

Michael Eitan, chief of the Likud party faction in parliament, summarized his government's position:

"We are interested in a peace agreement with the Palestinians," he said, "but we demand that the Palestinian side understand that settlements will remain, building in the settlements will continue, and there will be a place for settlements, for Palestinians and for peace."

There is little chance that Palestinians will accept their place in that scheme, or any of several other positions that Netanyahu's government now defines as absolute: no compromise on East Jerusalem, no return of Palestinian refugees from the wars that dislodged them and no independent Palestinian homeland.

The previous Labor Party government, under prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, was willing to negotiate on all of those things and be creative about finessing them when it could. Netanyahu, however, appears to be more interested in drawing lines and making good on campaign promises to show the Palestinians who is boss.

"We are sliding quickly toward a crisis, more than a crisis, in fact," said Khalil Shikaki, who heads the Palestine Center for Research and Studies and is usually something of an optimist about Israeli-Palestinian peace. Israel's insistence that settlement is not negotiable, he said, "is convincing Palestinians that this is something they can do absolutely nothing about peacefully."

Arafat's self-rule cabinet, meeting in Gaza City into the early-morning hours last Saturday, responded to the new Israeli policy on settlements with a call for "the masses everywhere to firmly confront with all possible means the Israeli settlement aggression in order to defend the land."

The last such throwing down of the gauntlet was in September, when Netanyahu unilaterally opened a tunnel running alongside Jerusalem's Temple Mount, a site central to Islam and Judaism alike.



A masked Hamas member watches an Israeli flag burn outside the Islamic university in the Gaza Strip last week

It was seen, and intended to be seen, as a declaration of Israel's sovereignty over the holy city.

Young Palestinians responded with rock-throwing demonstrations. Israeli soldiers fired on the demonstrators. Palestinian police fired at the Israeli soldiers, and four days of street combat left more than 70 people dead.

That tunnel is still open at both ends, including the new entrance opened against the will of the Palestinian Muslim administrators of the Temple Mount. But few Israelis, and few members of Netanyahu's cabinet, are willing to argue that it was worth the cost: an Arab world reunified in condemnation of Israel, a major loss of tourism, and chilling relations between Israel and world leaders who had embraced it only months before.

Israel's security services, as they did in September, are leaking re-

ports to trusted reporters that they have warned Netanyahu against unilateral action. Israeli television reported last week that Shimon Peres, former prime minister and now a vocal dissenter from the new settlement policy, telling Netanyahu sharply: "If you say 'settlements,' you've said war."

Arafat, for his part, is mixing defiance with signals that he is willing to cooperate when asked. After gunmen killed two settlers — a woman and her 12-year-old son — near Bet El, then fled to Ramallah last week, Arafat invited Israeli forensic experts to the self-ruled city to identify their getaway car. His forces have now arrested about 30 activists of the extremist faction that claimed responsibility for the attack, and Ramallah's police chief, Colonel Yunis Al-Afi, said his investigators were close to catching the killers.

### In Brief

**A** SOUTH Korean appellate court on Monday reduced the death sentence of former president Chun Doo Hwan to life in prison. The court cited as mitigating factors Chun's contribution to the country's economic development and his role in establishing free elections to determine his successor.

The court also reduced the sentence of former president Roh Tae Woo from 22 years to 17 years, and it reduced the sentences of 12 other defendants who were convicted with the two ex-presidents.

Chun and Roh were convicted of treason for their roles in a 1979 coup that brought Chun to power, as well as a 1980 massacre of demonstrators for democracy in the southern city of Kwangju.

President Kim Young Sam has made cleaning up past corruption a cornerstone of his administration. But sources close to the president say that he likely will pardon his two predecessors before he leaves office next year.

**P**RESIDENT Clinton announced on Friday last week his latest round of White House and Cabinet appointments, then plunged into a range of divisive issues at an hour-long news conference. He tentatively endorsed a proposed television ratings system, passionately defended his position on late-term abortions and pledged to do more to help the District of Columbia.

Clinton made official several choices that had been forecast by administration officials a day earlier, nominating Rep. Bill Richardson, D-New Mexico, as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and Chicago lawyer William Daley as commerce secretary.

Clinton also confirmed reports that he had asked Attorney General Janet Reno to continue in office.

## TWA Probe Spurs Fuel Tank Warning

Don Phillips and  
Serge F. Kovaleski

THE National Transportation Safety Board "urgently" recommended last week that center fuel tanks on thousands of airliners be modified to prevent a buildup of explosive vapors. The warning came after investigators determined that a buildup of static electricity on a fuel line could have caused the tank of Trans World Airlines Flight 800 to explode.

Bernard S. Loeb, director of the board's aviation safety division, said static electricity is "by no means certain" to be the source of the fuel tank ignition, but is "a very possible source."

The safety board statement brought to the surface a simmering feud with the FBI. James K. Kallstrom, FBI assistant director, said with apparent irritation: "We are not going to express opinions and we shouldn't. We are conducting a criminal investigation and it is not

prudent or wise for us to state opinions about what or what did not happen to this airplane."

The Boeing 747 exploded in flames July 17, sending 230 people to their deaths in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Long Island. At first, a bomb was assumed to be the cause of the crash, but investigators have leaned more toward a mechanical cause as the investigation has dragged on.

The recommendations cover the roughly 1,000 747 jets operating around the world and other airliners with center fuel tanks that have a nearby heat source. The vast majority of commercial airliners probably would be covered by the proposals. A spokesman for Boeing said all Boeing 747s have center fuel tanks except the new 777, but he could not say immediately how many were surrounded by heat sources.

Boeing spokesman Douglas Webb said the recommendations could have "far-reaching effects for

the entire industry," and the industry "must have sufficient technical data and a thorough understanding" of how the changes would affect the overall operating character of the airplane.

Investigators knew shortly after the TWA crash that fumes in the nearly empty center tank exploded violently, but have not been able to determine a source of ignition.

The explosion theory outlined by investigators involves a lengthy chain of events and conditions, all of which would have to combine in just the right way to cause an explosion. The tank would have to be the right temperature at the right internal pressure; the fuel pipe would have to be in use, and it would have to be damaged in such a way that a buildup of static electricity would cause a spark.

Airline accidents are usually the result of such a "long, thin chain" of events, in which the accident would not have happened if any one link were broken.

The fuel pipe involved is used to move fuel from the wing tanks on one side of the plane to engines on the other side, a routine practice as pilots manage fuel flow from the 747's five main tanks during a flight. But the fuel line that passes through the center tank is not one solid pipe but a number of shorter aluminum sections that are screwed together, with rubber O-rings to prevent fuel spillage.

These pipes have been known to come loose at the joint, separating the metal sections slightly. If a section becomes isolated and the static charge has no ground, an electrical arc can occur across the gap. In addition, a fuel leak spewing into vapors already in the tank could form a static charge.

Loeb said investigators are now examining crash wreckage in an effort to determine whether electrical arcing occurred on Flight 800, although arcs can leave no trace. Investigators already have determined that the other events likely happened.

Giants merge, page 14

**T**HE International Monetary Fund, in a boost to the Kremlin, has approved the resumption of lending to Russia, citing an improvement in tax collection, which had fallen off sharply earlier this year.

The fund announced late last week in Washington that its executive board would release the delayed October installment of a three-year \$10.3 billion loan.

The IMF delayed that installment following a precipitous decline in tax revenue this year, both before and after President Boris Yeltsin's re-election. Many firms stopped paying taxes before the election as they waited to see if Yeltsin would win — and afterward, they did not resume payment. Moreover, the Yeltsin government handed out a large number of tax exemptions, which further sliced into revenues.

The IMF suspended the loans when it appeared that Russia was failing to adhere to monthly economic performance criteria for the loans.